

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DOHA 01370 151235Z
ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 L-03 H-01 SSO-00 /019 W
----- 009541 /41
O R 151135Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2106
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA

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DEPT ALSO FOR NEA/ARP AND H

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC (FLUG, JAMES F)
SUBJ: DEPORTATION OF AMCIT PREVENTED

REF: STATE 301383 (NOTAL)

1. DURING NIGHT DEC 13-14, JAMES F. FLUG, DIRECTOR, AND
COUNSELOF ENERGY ACTION COMMITTEE, WHO HAD COME TO DOHA IN
CONNECTION WITH OPEC MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE WAS DETAINED BY
POLICE IN THE OASIS HOTEL WHILE AWAITING DEPORTATION. POLICE
SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD ENTERED QATAR WITH A VISA ISSUED BY
THE QATARI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON ON DEC 8, 1976, HE HAD NOT BEEN
INVITED BY MIN OF INFO AS A CORRESPONDENT AND HAD NOT OBTAINED
PRIOR POLICE CLEARANCES. FLUG HAD INSTEAD BEEN GRANTED VISA
APPARENTLY ON BASIS OF LETTER FROM SENATOR JAMES ABOUREZK.
ON DEC 10 HE OBTAINED LETTER OF ACCREDITATION FROM THE "NATION".

2. UPON ARRIVAL IN DOHA, FLUG WAS ADMITTED BUT GOQ APPARENTLY
BEGAN TO HAVE DOUBTS SINCE HE NOT ON LIST OF REGISTERED NEWSMEN,
HE LISTED HIS PROFESSION AS ATTORNEY ON PREVIOUS APPLICATION
MADE IN NOVEMBER, AND BECAUSE OF HIS FRANK ADMISSION THAT HE
HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN CORRESPONDENT. POLICE, WHO APPEARED TO BE
EQUALLY FRANK, SAID THAT THEY SUSPICIOUS OF FLUG'S BONA FIDES
AND GIVEN THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY OF OPEC AND THE
RISKS WHICH THEY ENCOUNTERING, FLUG WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE
COUNTRY. AFTER THE OPEC MEETINGS, HOWEVER, POLICE ASSURED HE
WOULD BE MOST WELCOME TO RETURN TO QATAR.

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PAGE 02 DOHA 01370 151235Z

3. POLICE INFORMED CONOFF OF ABOVE AT 2230 HOURS DEC 13. CONOFF IN TURN ALERTED AMBASSADOR AND PAO. PAO AND CONOFF THEN MADE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS WITH MEDIUM-LEVEL POLICE OFFICIALS AND ARRANGED FOR MEETING BETWEEN AMB AND FLUG. POLICE FIRM THAT THEY UNDER ORDERS TO DEPORT FLUG ON DEC 14 0400 HRS FLIGHT TO LONDON, BUT ALLOWED FLUG TO LEAVE HOTEL TO MEET WITH AMB. AFTER HEARING FLUG'S STORY AMB DIRECTED CONOFF TO MAKE FURTHER REPRESENTATION TO POLICE COMMANDANT REQUESTING STAY OF DEPORTATION ORDER UNTIL MATTER COULD BE FURTHER DISCUSSED. AS 0400 DEADLINE APPROACHED, REPRESENTATION WAS MADE TO POLICE COMMANDANT SHAYKH HAMID BIN JASIM AL THANI WHO WAS AWAKENED AND AGREED TO POSTPONE DEPORTATION UNTIL 1000 HOURS. THIS DELAY PERMITTED FURTHER REPRESENTATION WITH MINISTER OF INFO ISSA AL KAWARI. RELUCTANTLY KAWARI AND SHAYKH HAMID AGREED TO PERMIT FLUG TO REMAIN BUT DENIED HIM PRESS CREDENTIALS OR ACCESS TO EITHER OASIS HOTEL IN WHICH REPORTERS WERE LODGING OR GULF HOTEL, SITE OF OPEC MEETINGS. FLUG WAS ULTIMATELY RELEASED TO CONOFF ON CONDITION HE LEAVE OASIS HOTEL. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY LOCATED HOTEL ROOM IN CROWDED CITY, FLUG PREFERRED TO RESIDE WITH BUSINESS CONTACT.

4. SHAYKH HAMAD AND MINISTER KAWARI HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO US THAT THEIR CANCELLATION OF FLUG'S EXPULSION ORDER WAS MAJOR CONCESSION BASED ON THEIR RESPECT FOR USG AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH EMBASSY. THEY WERE EMPHATIC IN THEIR REJECTION OF FLUG'S PRESS CREDENTIALS, AND MADE IT PLAIN THAT ALTHOUGH HE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN DOHA, HE COULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OPEC MINISTERIAL. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR REPRESENTATIONS IN BEHALF OF FLUG HAVE REACHED THEIR LIMIT, AND HE SEEMS TO UNDERSTAND THIS.

5. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT FLUG IS THE WRONG MAN IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME. HE HAS PROPERLY ARGUED THAT HE OBTAINED HIS VISA AND PRESS CREDENTIALS IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER AND MADE NO RPT NO EFFORT TO MISREPRESENT HIMSELF IN ANY WAY. WE AGREE, AND OF COURSE HAVE POINTED THESE FACTS OUT TO THE QATARIS CONCERNED, BUT THEY ARE HAVING NONE OF THIS AND WE HAVE DONE THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. FLUG IS NATURALLY DISAPPOINTED TO HAVE COME ALL THIS WAY ONLY TO BE FROZEN IN HIS TRACKS, BUT HE APPEARS TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS THE GOQ'S PREROGATIVE T DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN FUNCTION HERE, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DOHA 01370 151235Z

THAT WHATEVER THE LOGIC OF HIS POSITION, IT IS NOT AT ALL PERSUASIVE TO THE QATARI HIND. FLUG HAS INDICATED THAT HE MAY SEEK OTHER ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE HIS PLIGHT FROM SENATOR ABOUREZK, JOAN BRADEN, FRED DUTTON AND/OR POSSIBLY A CONTACT WHICH HE HAS IN THE SAUDI DELEGATION TT OPEC MINISTERIAL. WE HAVE AEEVISED HIM THAT HE IS FREE TO TRY THIS, BUT THAT HE SHOULD WATCH HIS STEP SINCE WE ARE SURE THAT QATARIS WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO BOOT HIM OUTSHOULD THEY BE GIVEN SLIGHTEST PRETEXT.

6. COMMENT CONTD: WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT SET QATARIS OFF AGAINST FLUG. SECURITY OFFICIALS HERE ARE PROPERLY UP TIGHT ABOUT THEIR GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION OF OPEC MINISTERIAL, AND AFTER VIENNA EXPERIENCE THEY ARE UNDERSTANDABLY TAKING NO RISKS NOR GIVING ANYONE BENEFIT OF ANY DOUBT. (ONE OBSERVER SUGGESTED THAT PART OF FLUG'S TROUBLE IS HIS RESEMBLANCE TT TERRORIST CARLOS.) SEVERAL MEMBERS OF LARGE AMERICAN PRESS GROUP PRESENTLY IN DOHA TO COVER OPEC CONFERENCE HAVE HEARD FLUG'S TALE OF WOE AND ARE LIKELY TO FILE STORY ON HIM. ONE REPORTED NOTED THAT AIMS OF FLUG'S ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH OPEC AND SO IT IS SPURNING A FRIEND. FROM WHAT REPORTERS TELL US, FLUG HAS GIVEN THEM A FAIR ACCOUNT OF HIS PREDICAMENT, AND HAS EDITED EMBASSY WITH DOING MAXIMUM POSSIBLE FOR HIM.

7. COMMENT CONTD: WE ARE REPORTING THIS INCIDENT IN SOME DETAIL SINCE WE BELIEVE STORY WILL HIT PRESS AND FLUG MAY APPROACH DEPT TR OTHERS AMONG HIS WASHINGTON FRIENDSON HIS RETURN TO US. PAGANELLI

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